

Alive by Janaynay

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Relationships: Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

El hears the song "Alive" by Sia for the first time at age 45. Her response is hurt, hope, and ultimately healing.

Alive

Author's Note:

I've never written anything like this before. I just love Sia and El so much, and think the song "Alive" is too perfect for El. I decided to imagine what it would be like for El, as a 45 year old woman, to hear this song for the first time. This is the result.

September, 2016

The first time she heard it, she was driving home from work. The sun was shining, her travel mug was empty, and she was looking forward to getting home and eating takeout for supper. It was Thursday, which meant Mike would be picking up Thai from their usual place, which she would happily eat in her housecoat before losing herself in her book for the evening while Mike wrote his own in the home office.

The radio was on, and her ears pricked as she heard a beautiful and usual voice begin to sing. *"I was born in a thunderstorm. I grew up overnight. I played alone, I played on my own, but I survived."*

El turned up the volume, her heart beginning to thud in her chest. These lyrics hit her in a way that felt too personal, too exposed. She swallowed sharply.

"No hope, just lies, and you're taught to cry in your pillow. But I survived." By the time the chorus started, her hands were shaking. Almost without thinking, she pulled over, not even hearing the car behind her honk at her sudden movement. She let herself get lost to the lyrics, the music, and the powerful voice that blasted from her speakers.

"You took it all, but I'm still breathing." The words hit her like a smack in the face, and she sat frozen in her seat, reeling.

The sound of the announcer's voice booming, "That was the latest track from Sia..." snapped her abruptly out of the moment she had

been having, and she was surprised to find her face was wet with tears. She willed herself into action, mumbling, “Sia, Sia...” as she fumbled around in her purse for a pen, hastily smearing the name in ink on the palm of her hand.

She shut the radio off and drove home in a daze. The second she was in the door, she ran to her computer, looking at the scrawl on her hand before typing, “Sia Alive” into the search engine. A link to the song came up and she clicked on it. Opening another tab, she found the lyrics, her eyes boring into the screen as she listened to the song for a second time.

The lyrics were even more powerful now that she could see them, understand them. They were at once cutting and freeing, and she felt her heart crack open, allowing her to feel things she had long repressed.

When Mike came home, he followed the music to find her in their bedroom, laying on the floor, her arms open and stretched away from her sides. He panicked, dropping to the floor immediately beside her.

“El, what’s wrong?” he asked, his hands grasping her shoulders.

Her teary eyes met his. “This song,” El gasped. “This song...Mike, I could have written it.” And then she curled into him and began to cry.

Mike held her, rubbing her back, still confused and full of concern. “Should I turn it off?”

She shook her head. “No, please. Leave it on.” She sniffled, gripping him tightly. “I want you to hear it.”

“Okay, El, whatever you want,” he said, and he meant it. He held her closer, stroking her hair as the music played.

The first time she heard the song, it stunned her. The fourth time she heard it, it broke her. But the ninth time - the ninth time, it freed her. The ninth time she could listen to it without crying. The ninth time she tried singing along, tentatively and quietly, but as the music got stronger, so did her voice. So did her spirit.

She rose to her feet. She began to dance, her arms wide, her face lifted to the sky. "*I'm alive*," she sang, and she felt it, from the top of her head to the tips of her toes.

Mike sat on the bed, watching her, his worry fading into awe. His wife was a warrior, and now she had her anthem.

Behind her, El's bright and cluttered inspiration board caught his eye, landing on a quote hanging in the center, written in her bold hand writing: **First the pain, then the rising. Warrior on.**

He stood to dance with her, their supper cold and forgotten about.

Author's Note:

Please go listen to Sia's amazing song!

Also, the quote at the end is from author and speaker Glennon Doyle. All credit to her.